



Coconino County Sheriff's Office

Bill Pribil, Sheriff

MEDIA RELEASE

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Winter Driving Safety

Flagstaff, AZ – County officials met with Northern Arizona public safety officials, government agencies and the media yesterday to discuss the upcoming storm on Thursday and Friday. The National Weather Service predicts the storm could dump several feet of additional snow and heavy rains in the area.

Coconino County Sheriff Bill Pribil would like to remind community members and visitors of some simple safety tips that will make your winter travel safer and more enjoyable. If you find yourself driving in the snow, *stay alert, slow down* and *stay in control*. These are the three key elements to safe driving in the snow.

Here are a few other tips for driving in the snow:

- During severe storms or blizzard conditions if your travel is not absolutely necessary or an emergency, do not travel. Considering the possibility of a severe storm beginning on Thursday out of town visitors who plan a trip to Northern Arizona should be aware of most current weather forecasts and strongly consider not traveling as weather conditions worsen.
- If you think you may be heading into snow or there is a possibility of driving in the snow, make sure you do a maintenance check on your vehicle before making the trip. Check the vehicle battery, belts and hoses, anti-freeze, oil, lights, brakes, heater and defroster and check the exhaust system for leaks which may allow carbon monoxide to enter the vehicle.
- Plan your route ahead of time and give yourself extra travel time. Make sure someone knows your travel plans.
- Wear comfortable clothing that does not restrict your movement while at the wheel. Keep warm clothing available for when you exit the vehicle.
- Always clear any snow and ice from all windows, lights, mirrors and the roof before driving. After starting the vehicle wait for the interior windows to clear of fog so you will have appropriate visibility.
- Make sure there is sufficient windshield washer fluid in the vehicle reservoir and that it is rated for freezing temperatures.
- It takes longer to stop on slippery surfaces, so add additional time to the three-second rule.
- Know the proper handling procedures for a skidding vehicle.



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- Slow down in snow and icy conditions, make turns slowly, and make all starts slow and smooth.
- Remember that bridges and overpasses may freeze before the regular travel lanes of a roadway. Watch out for black ice, areas of the roadway that appear black and shiny and where your vehicle can suddenly lose traction. Slow down in these areas and keep your foot off the brakes.
- If you get stuck or stranded, don't panic. Stay with your vehicle for safety and warmth. Wait for help to arrive. If you have a cell phone and are in an area with cell phone service, try calling for help. Try to always know your exact locations while driving.
- Keep your clothing dry. Wet clothing can lead to dangerous loss of body heat.

Winter Driving Survival Kit:

It's a good idea to keep a winter survival kit in your vehicle if you might be traveling into an area where you could encounter snow. Having essential supplies can provide some comfort and safety for you and your passengers. The following items are recommended for your winter driving survival kit:

- Ice scraper/snowbrush
- Shovel
- Sand or other type of traction aid
- Tow rope or chain
- Booster cables
- Road flares or warning lights
- Gas line antifreeze
- Flashlight and batteries
- First aid kit
- Fire extinguisher
- Small tool kit
- Extra clothing and foot wear
- Non-perishable energy foods, like chocolate or granola bars, juice, instant coffee, tea, soup, and bottled water
- Candles and a small tin can to hold the candle
- Water proof matches

Winter driving can be safe with planning and extra caution. Sheriff Bill Pribil and the Men and Women of the Coconino County Sheriff's Office would like to wish all community members and visitors a safe and happy Holiday Season.

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